

# Tribal Elder Sam Dala keeps writing away

By Danielle Frost  
Smoke Signals staff writer

On any given day, Tribal Elder Samantha “Sam” Dala will be sitting at her computer, letting her imagination flow through her fingertips as she strikes the keys.

Dala, who lives in Elder housing, has been writing in some form since she was 7 years old.

“I started with poetry,” Dala says at the Elders Activity Center. “I like to mess around with it and try out different kinds of writing. But I won’t write bloody, gory books.”

Dala, 68, says she enjoys writing “true crime”-style books and started a series, “A Special Case,” a few years ago. It follows Detective Sam and her friends on adventures as they solve crimes.

Dala has another book being released in November titled “The Heist,” where the perpetrators rob Fort Knox and the reader follows the characters on twists and turns throughout.

“It is going to be so good,” she says.

Dala says she is inspired by what she sees and hears in everyday life, but doesn’t research her topics. Instead, she starts writing and lets the words spring to life on the page.

If you read one of her books and come upon a character who seems familiar, it’s probably not an accident.

“Everyone I know is in my books,” she says. “So am I. My name is Dea in most of my books.”

Dala also writes children’s books, inspired by her 6-year-old granddaughter. “When she was 4, she asked me why I didn’t write a drag-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Tribal Elder Samantha Dala has written eight books and she has more to be published.**

on book, so I did.”

That was two years ago. Dala has since written five of the dragon books. One features artwork from her grandchildren.

The plot involves three dragons: mother, Lissy, and two small dragons, Liz and Tess, who are learning how to make children happy by magic and the life they live. The baby dragons’ wings change colors when they are helping others.

“I get bored, so I write,” Dala says. “I just sit down and start working. Especially as you get older, there is not a lot to do.”

With the holidays fast approaching, Dala says she is redoing her “Holly Tones 1 and 2” books and reselling them.

Dala says she loves the holidays and already has hung her lights.

“I had them up before Halloween so the kids could see as they stopped by,” she says.

She encourages aspiring writers to “just start from the beginning and go for it. Just do it.”

And how does Dala know when her books have reached a conclusion?

“I just stop writing it,” she says. “You can continue on later if you don’t know where to stop.”

Dala uses Harper Media to self-publish her books and also sells them on Amazon and Barnes & Noble websites. Her books also are available for checkout at the Tribal

Library.

When inspiration from the usual sources of television and online browsing isn’t sufficient, Dala says she resorts to the time-tested method of many authors: Stop working and do something else.

“I go out, ride around on my wheelchair and think of new things to write about,” she says. “It’s no problem to come up with ideas. I have thought about branching out to new topics, but am waiting for someone to bring it up.”

Of all of her current books, Dala says she loves the dragon series the most because it was inspired by her grandchildren.

“I wrote those mainly for them,” she says.

Future goals include writing 20 books in the next year. “If I can do that, I will be happy,” she says.

Besides writing books, Dala says her other hobbies include making blankets, word-find puzzles, and writing poetry and songs.

But you won’t find her reading.

“I hate to read,” she jokes.

When asked if there was anything else she wants people to know about her, Dala’s answer was simple.

“Buy my books,” she says. ■

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115 SW 2nd Street, Corvallis  
7 pm - doors open at 6  
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foods & drinks for sale by Majestic Theatre  
books featured by Grass Roots

<del>October 4</del> <del>The Kalapuya Then and Now</del> <del>David Harrelson</del>	<del>November 8</del> <del>Kalapuya Archaeology</del> <del>Dr. Thomas Connolly</del>	December 13 Native Space Dr. Natchee Barnd
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*(Note: The October 4 and November 8 events are crossed out with a large X.)*

Lecture series sponsors: Marys Peak Group, SIERRA CLUB, Abundant Solar

## Gift Making Workshop

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Join us and help make giveaway gifts for Tribal Events hosted throughout the year.

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Main events: Plank house Birthday Celebration, Restoration Celebration, Round Dance, Canoe Journey, Youth Powwow’s, Elder’s Honor day and Cultural Exchanges.

Dinner provided

~~November 9th~~  
November 30th  
December 14th

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm  
at the Tribal Community Center

Sponsored by the Cultural Education and Youth Prevention Programs

(the workshop is a year round event, future events will be advertised at a later date)